Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0925KY-1 for Montgomery County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided evidence of a vision that articulates a commitment to turning around its lowest achieving schools by implementing smaller learning communities through the use of the Baldridge System and increasing personalization of learning through the use of data systems and algorithms. The vision also clearly articulates the desire to develop innovative and effective teachers and leaders.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a description of the process used to select participants (all schools within the district) and has provided a sound rationale for the breadth of participation. The schools are clearly listed and subgroup status of the participants is provided.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of a high quality plan to scale up the initiative through the implementation of the Baldridge Performance Excellence Program and the creation of a culture of improvement and innovation. The district also cites a plan to include evidence based evaluations for not only teachers but building and district leadership inclusive of the school board.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided comprehensive evidence that the plan as stated will result in improved student learning and increased equity. The performance measures and goals are ambitious and achievable when one takes into account the recent improvements achieved by the district in ranking within the state. The goals speak to substantial increases in all areas and if attained would effectively improve outcomes for all and close the achievement gap. While there is some evidence that improvements have already been made, data presented is primarily focused specifically on one year (2011-2012) and does not support fully the assertion that the goal outcomes are achievable given a single year of improvement.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides evidence of advancing student outcomes and implementing significant reforms in preceding years. However, the data is limited in its scope and focuses on two school years in particular (2010-2011. Evidence of a focus on leadership and responsive data analysis to improve programs in lower achieving schools is also provided.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	**5**	**5**

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides ample evidence that transparency in financial matters has been made a priority within the district. All salaries, wage schedules and budgetary information are provided to the community in a proactive manner through multiple media points. Additionally, the district is actively identifying ways to further promote transparency regarding financial matters.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided evidence of local and building autonomy being supported through the existence of School Based Decision Making council's (SBDM) at each building and also cites letters of support from local and state education authorities for the plan.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has shown evidence of stakeholder engagement and support for the proposal through its description of the process used to develop the proposal, letters from key stakeholders and signature sheets indicating support of the plan from faculty at a rate higher than 70%.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	**5**	**2**

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district has articulated a plan to identify needs and gaps through the development and implementation of common daily learning targets, curriculum planning process and curriculum planning document. The district response did not include a plan for the analysis of current status in implementing personalized learning environments.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**18**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided an exhaustive plan for the implementation of personalized learning that supports college and career readiness for students. Evidence includes the delineation of four cognitive stages (Developmental, Discovery, Exploratory, and Expeditionary) and has articulated a clear plan and process to promote personalization and goal setting at each stage. The instructional approaches are varied and the content is of high quality. Also increasing the quality of the response are protocols for feedback, data reporting, and progress monitoring.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	**20**	**18**

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

All areas of the plan are supported by targeted professional development for leaders and teachers. There is evidence that a high quality plan exists to personalize professional development for teachers and leaders within the district in the areas of personalized learning plans and standards based grading. The applicant has also identified that teacher reassignment is being considered to increase the number of students taught by highly effective teachers but does not fully articulate a plan for implementation of such an initiative.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides extensive evidence that LEA practices, policies and rules promote and are responsive to objectives in the plan. A district model of evidence based evaluation will be used not only with teachers but with district level administration and school board members to ensure effective leadership and teaching at all levels. The district cites recent restructuring at the central office level, school based leadership teams, and infrastructure that supports communication as further evidence of a high quality plan and structure to support the project.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has demonstrated that it has policies and infrastructure in place to support personalized learning by articulating a plan to enhance the use of the district student information system through training and support to parents, students and educators. The plan limited in regards to information about budget data but does speak to supporting and providing equitable access to stakeholders who do not have internet access readily available due to financial constraints.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has demonstrated a quality plan to continue to implement and enhance existing evaluative and input processes regarding school improvement. The district also has provided a unique implementation and impact tool that it will use to assess the impact of funding and resource allocations on student achievement.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides detailed evidence that it will continue to support and facilitate ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The plan includes a variety of media formats, social media networking, advisory councils that will provide the context and input needed to evaluate the program outcomes.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided the appropriate performance standards and includes yearly targets that are attainable yet achievable, most showing improvement of 20-30 percentage points over the course of the grant. The plan lacks in specificity regarding methodology used to calculate the measure.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided a plan that calls for the continuation of existing data structures to allow district leadership to evaluate plan acquisition of targeted goals and outcomes. The plan does not specifically describe how data will be used to inform decision making except to state that improved access will facilitate instructional improvement.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
	Available	Score

(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided a comprehensive budget including narratives and tables is reasonable given the scope of the proposal. The budget narrative also clearly outlines funding sources, provides a sound rationale for investments and delineates all one time investments.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided a feasible plan for the continuation of the projects goals once grant funding is exhausted. The plan relies on multiple funding sources and the district communicates a clear priority for student learning, curriculum and instruction in their sustainability narrative.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The district has met the competitive preference priority through its plan to partner with multiple community resources to improve outcomes for students in four domains. Lacking in the narrative is detailed information to address how the partnership will increase the capacity of staff in participating schools.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The district has provided extensive evidence that the plan proposed will meet and address all four core educational assurance areas. The vision provided is comprehensive and well supported by the district's track record for success in turning around underperforming schools.

Total	210	185

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0925KY-3 for Montgomery County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a coherent and comprehensive reform vision that builds on work done around the four core educational assurance areas. The applicant articulates a clear approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement and increasing equity through personalized student support based on the tenets of the Baldridge Performance Excellence Program (BPEP). The applicant provides a detailed chronology of important landmarks that support the reform vision such as the selection of a new superintendent, the adoption of Kentucky's Common Core State Standards, the development of systemic data systems, the focus on personalized professional development, and improvement of lowest performing schools. Providing this historical perspective adds clarity to the applicant's reform vision.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides convincing research and statistical data to make the case for selecting all schools in the district for participation in the reform proposal. The applicant provides school demographic data indicating that the total K-12 school enrollment is 4,677 students with 2767 students classified as low income and 1,266 students classified as high need. According to the applicant, 59% of the school population is from low-income households. Therefore, the applicant provides sufficient data to indicate the schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. The applicant includes a list of schools that will participate in the grant's activities.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not sufficiently describe the elements of a high-quality plan when describing how the reform proposal will be translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change. For example, the applicant describes a series of "drivers" in the reform effort such as leadership, management analysis, and an engaged workforce. The applicant also notes the importance of the four course educational assurances such as the curriculum, recruitment and retention of teachers, and quality professional development. But, the applicant does not clearly link these separate, but interrelated strands into a cohesive plan with goals, activities, timelines and responsible parties identified. The applicant does not sufficiently explain how its logic model or theory of change will blend all elements to improve student learning outcomes for all students in the district.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has selected ambitious yet achievable annual goals across the grade spans that will result in improved student learning and performance, as well as increased equity. For example, the applicant provides helpful background information to explain the district's climb in state ranking to the top 50 within one year, attributing much of the climb to student achievement data. The applicant supplying this background was helpful in determining that the projected yearly 10 point gain across all grades levels on the state assessment for the 4 years of the proposal was ambitious, but achievable in light of past impressive student achievement gains.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence from 2008 to 2012 of a clear record of success over the past four years using data from a variety of sources including PLAN assessment gains that are described by the applicant as small, though significant increases. According to the applicant, student performance improved in every area, English, Math, Reading and Science over the last four years.

The applicant also cites convincing data representing an increase in student achievement on national assessments such as

ACT. According to the applicant for the last four years, the average ACT score in math in the district has increased from 18.0 to 18.4. Similar improvements were also cited for Reading ACT scores which rose in the district from 18.3 in 2008 to 18.9 in 2012. However, the applicant did not provide information on whether the number of students taking the ACT has also increased, remained constant or decreased over this four year period. Without this level of information, a precise evaluation of ACT gains cannot be made.

The applicant does a good job of describing the record of success the district has in achieving ambitious and significant reform in its persistently lowest-achieving schools over the last year. The applicant provides revealing data on two schools. One of which is Camargo Elementary who ranked in the bottom 26% of elementary schools in the state; the school did not meet any of its AYP goals from 2010 to 2011. The applicant cites a 14.4 point gain by third graders on the reading assessment and a 11.1 point increase by fifth graders in math. Similar evidence is provided for McNabb Middle Schools who made impressive gains in math scores between 2010 and 2011. The applicant's focus on achievement gains between 2010 to 2011 is not sufficient to demonstrate evidence of convincing reform over the past four years.

Finally, the applicant describes how student performance data is shared and analyzed among educators within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and at School Board meetings. Evidence is also provided as to how student performance data are made available to parents and students in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services, such as publishing common assessment data and state assessment data in local newspaper and posted on the district's website.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence of a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. According to the applicant, more transparency will be forthcoming with additional implementation of the Baldrige Model. Currently, the applicant notes that stakeholders can access the district' Salary Schedule on the district's website, information on actual personnel salaries for school level instructional and support staff, as well as non-personnel expenditures at the school level are available. According to the applicant, additional information is available via the Kentucky Dept. of Ed's Open House data portal.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides sufficient evidence of the district having autonomy under KRS 160.345 (School Based Decision Making--SBDM) to implement personalized learning environments. The applicant's description of SBDM gives these councils, composed of parents and teachers, tremendous authority to make and evaluate actions intended to impact students' personalized learning environments and experiences, such as determinations about instructional programs, software, professional development, as well as the continuation of programming.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes letters of support from a variety of stakeholders indicating a broad base of community support for the proposal, including parent/teacher organizations, businesses, as well as a local university--Morehead State University.

The applicant also provides convincing evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal including a writing team composed of representatives from the educator, business and parent representatives. The applicant also describes a very intentional process for soliciting input and feedback that included student advisory council, Montgomery County Ed. Association, SBDM councils, State Board of Ed., as well as public forums.

The applicant indicates that 70% of teachers support the proposal. Signature pages from central office and individual schools were included in the appendix.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not sufficiently present evidence of a high quality plan for an analysis of the district's current status in implementing personalized learning environments. The applicant provides a chronology of reform efforts that have been undertaken thus far including extensive work deconstructing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and implementing Response to Intervention, but does not provide any analysis of identified needs and gaps that the plan will address. In other

words, the applicant does not sufficiently describe the gap and need analysis that has been performed in a coherent, well developed high-quality plan including goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and person(s) responsible for implementation.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a variety of research-based approaches to achieve the goal of graduating all students college and career ready and globally competitive. Yet, the applicant does not sufficiently bring the diverse approaches presented under these criteria together using the umbrella of a high-quality plan. For example, in one place the applicant's approach describes how daily formative assessment and common unit assessments will be used to ensure that students know exactly what is expected of them. According to the applicant, students will receive on-going and regular feedback and work with Performance Advocates to discuss feedback and monitor on-going progress toward standards' mastery and graduation requirements.

The applicant also describes another approach in the discussion of two especially innovative strategies: Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) and K-12 blended learning approach. According to the applicant, the blended learning approach includes a rotation through online and offline learning within a fixed schedule based on individual needs.

The applicant describes yet another approach in the School of One model in New York City where a computerized algorithm based on the student's learning style and a variety of other elements are used to determine a student's daily learning sequence.

The applicant does not sufficiently bring all of these approaches together in a high-quality plan. Overarching goals, aligned activities, specific deliverables, timeline and person(s) responsible are not included.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a variety of professional development for educators designed to help educators improve instruction and increase their capacity to support all students graduating from high school, college and career ready and globally competitive. Yet, the applicant does not sufficiently bring the diverse approaches presented under these criteria together using the umbrella of a high-quality plan.   For example, the applicant describes Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as the center of most professional learning for educators, with teachers working with instructional coaches and technology instructional coaches to learn strategies that meet each student's academic needs.

The applicant also describes how feedback from the state's new teacher and principal evaluation system, The Teacher and Principal Professional Growth and Effectiveness System, will be used to improve practice by providing educators with the tools needed to create optimal learning approaches for each student.

Finally, the applicant also describes a process for recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers and principals that includes a partnership with Morehead State University's Education Department.

All of these strategies have merit. Yet, the applicant does not sufficiently bring all of the elements described under these criteria together in a high-quality plan. Overarching goals, aligned activities, specific deliverables, timeline and person(s) responsible are not included.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes an array of practices, policies and rules that help facilitate personalized learning. For example,

throughout the proposal the applicant stresses the importance of the district's adoption of a "charter school" approach to leadership and management. The applicant does describe some central office changes that can provide support and services to participating schools such as reducing the number of district administrators to increase the number of educators, while striving to avoid duplication and repetitiveness in district processes.

According to the applicant, school-based decision making councils (SBDM) working under the tenets of the Baldrige Program are provided the flexibility to reach decisions using data to improve student achievement, workforce engagement, and to increase parent satisfaction.

The applicant also describes a realistic process where students will be able to demonstrate mastery based on their individual needs, using different modalities, timeframes, and assessment instruments. The applicant's partnership with a local university to provide dual credit courses provides evidence of another method for students to demonstrate mastery in ways not based on time-in-seat. The applicant also describes future projections of developing and implementing a competency-based assessment plan, where students will have the option of earning by enrolling in core-elective, vocational classes or job shadowing. Finally, the applicant describes a series of efforts designed to help students of all abilities to progress toward mastery of standards such as videotaped lecture notes and supplemental instructional resources.

All of these strategies have merit. Yet, the applicant does not sufficiently bring all of the elements described under these criteria together in a high-quality plan. Overarching goals, aligned activities, specific deliverables, timeline and person(s) responsible are not included.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a district and school-level infrastructure that appears to support personalized learning such as the state adopted student information systems, *Infinite Campus* (IC). The applicant acknowledges that accessibility to the internet may present a barrier for some students and parents. Ambitious plans are described for the district to partner with the community to develop and sustain wi-fi hot spots in local churches and community centers. According to the applicant, a process will also be created for lending laptops and iPods, as needed. Technology support, according to the applicant, will also be available in web accessible formats, videos, and processes, as well as hard copy pamphlets.

All of these strategies described above have merit. Yet, the applicant does not sufficiently bring all of the elements described under these criteria together in a high-quality plan. Overarching goals, aligned activities, specific deliverables, timeline and person(s) responsible are not included.

Finally, the applicant does not provide sufficient information regarding the interoperable data systems in the district and school to help determine if systems such as human resources data, student information data, and instructional improvement system data are interoperable.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high-quality approach for providing timely and regular feedback on project goals and opportunities for ongoing correction and improvements. For example the applicant does a good job of embedding tenets of the Baldrige model for rigorous continuous improvement throughout the proposal. The Performance Improvement Council (PIC) established to ensure implementation of the Baldrige template appears to be a good process for guaranteeing continuous improvements. Schools analyzing formal and informal data on a weekly basis establishes a clear process for monitoring data for student achievement. In addition, the applicant provides a clear description of how information will be shared each month with all stakeholders during Bd. of Ed. meetings, released to local media, and placed on district websites. An indication of the applicant's commitment to implementing the Baldrige template is the projected creation of quarterly public meetings throughout the district to ensure diverse participation. The applicant describes a sound process for sharing information publically about elements of the grant's implementation, as well as, for getting feedback from a variety of stakeholders.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a detailed description of how full implementation of the Baldridge Performance Excellence Program includes a process for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. For example, according to the applicant the district will continue to engage and communicate with local stakeholders through resources including regularly maintained district and school-level websites, weekly parent and employee electronic newsletters, and a host of other methods. In addition, the applicant also described a variety of projected activities designed to expand its communication base to engage and communicate with regional and state-wide stakeholders. According to the applicant the district will develop a leadership training center. Finally, the applicant also does a good job of describing communication resources such as networking opportunities, and state-level presentations. The applicant describes a fully developed communication process to provide on-going continuous communication and engagement.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes performance measures in each of the grade configurations since the Baldrige improvement template spans K-12.   The applicant's preK-3 rationale provides for using performance measures to improve student academic performance based in part on DIAL, a developmentally appropriate tool based on RTI. The rationale is clear and reasonable. The K-3 rationale is the only rationale provided.   A similar rationale is not provided to explain the selection of 6-8 or 9-12 measures. The applicant does not sufficiently explain how any of the measures across the grade spans will provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information and how the measures will be reviewed and improved over time to determine if the measure is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

The measures selected appear ambitious, consistent, and achievable. However, there are a few instances where additional clarification is needed. For example, the applicant projects a 10 point yearly gain on ACT English, math, and reading across target groups during the grant period. However, a 15 point gain is projected in the third year of implementation for science and writing on demand. More information is needed to explain the 15 point projection based on Science Benchmarks 21 & 24 at grades 10 & 11, as well as grade 10 & 11 writing on demand. The applicant has the mandatory number of performance measures.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides clear and comprehensive plans to evaluate the effectiveness of RTT-D funded activities such as professional development and activities that employ technology, and to more productively use time. The applicant describes how the Baldrige Template provides for the measurement, evaluation and improvement of organizational management. The applicant does a good job of describing how the proposal will build on the system of continuous evaluation and improvement established through the state's RTT grant. According to the applicant, the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) will support the instructional improvement efforts of teachers and leaders. The applicant describes a full range of resources and strategies that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of investments made as a result of being awarded the RTT-D grant.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a clear budget narrative and tables to identify all funds that will be used to support the grant including other funding sources. The applicant does a good job of describing other funding sources, and also clearly identifies how the other funding sources will be used. For example, according to the applicant the district will contribute $3 million toward technology over the first 3 years of the grant and $250,000 the 4th year of the grant. The applicant describes how this funding will be used to sustain the technology aspect of the project as upgrades, repairs, and additional needs are identified.

The budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal.

The applicant does a good job of presenting a clear distinction between one-time investments versus those that will be used

for ongoing operational costs. The applicant outlines this description by providing a yearly break down. For example, in year one the applicant discusses an assortment of a one-time investments that will be made to enrich the resources in the early childhood education programs. The clarifying narratives help to explain the line item budget and to ensure that the items have been selected with a focus on ensuring the long-term sustainability of personalized learning environments.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does partially describe a high quality plan for sustaining the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant provides a helpful chart outlining how a variety of funding sources including title I, title II, and Kentucky Ed. Technology System will be used to sustain components of the grant from 2016- 2019. In addition, the applicant notes that professional development will be provided to and within the district based on a train the trainer model. According to the applicant this will develop capacity to provide ongoing training to new staff members. Although the applicant does not identify the person(s) who will be responsible for coordinating the activities that are projected in the chart, the applicant does provide budget assumptions, and potential sources.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a well-organized description of a coherent and sustainable partnership with several community resources such as Community Education, Migrant Program, Extended School Services, and Great Leaps to assist families and students. The applicant does a good job of describing the partnerships' dynamics under three areas that link directly back to the district's proposal and are designed to augment the district's resources. These areas are academic, personal development and social development.

For example, under the academic component, the applicant's migrant program will provide academic support to targeted students through tutoring, materials and school supplies, with limited home visits. In a similar vein, the applicant proposes under the social development component, a partnership with the district school resource officer to instruct students on drug and alcohol awareness and refusal skills, as well as provide mentor services for at-risk students.

The applicant identifies 6 population-level desired results for high school students in the district. The results described by the applicant are both educational and family.

The applicant also provides a credible process for tracking indicators from a database which will supply data for each school; this will serve as an early warning indicator for targeted students who may be off-track to graduate. In addition, the applicant describes benefits of the Persistence to Graduation Tool (PtGt) being used to track the selected indicators. According to the applicant, the PtGt will allow data to be disaggregated based on sex, race, disability, free and reduced lunch status at the school. This provides an excellent way to target services and resources. The applicant describes a realistic program that through the three components provides a vehicle for integrating educator and other services to selected students in the district.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a coherent and comprehensive process for creating learning environments around the core educational assurance areas designed to improve learning and teaching through personalized tools, strategies and supports. The applicant provides a clear description of how the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program and innovative leadership will be the cornerstones of a host of reform strategies including Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for educators, individual student performance portfolios, expanded use of Individual Learning Plans, and students demonstrating

content mastery that is not driven by seat time. The applicant embeds strategies within the proposal for accelerating student achievement and deepening student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student. Underlying the proposal are the overarching goals of increasing educator effectiveness, decreasing achievement gaps across student groups and increasing the rates which student graduate from high school college and career ready.

Total	210	176

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0925KY-4 for Montgomery County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a description of a vision for school reform that includes the implementation of a student-centric data system, a new teacher compensation system, high quality professional development and effective leadership. Details regarding the current use of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Model are included, along with details that address work in four core educational areas. These include implementation of the new Common Core Standards, through state-level networks, personalized learning environments that provide teachers and principals with information on how they can improve instruction, use of a data system that provide customized educational programming for each student by adjusting each day's learning sequence, and recruiting, retaining and rewarding educators while providing support through customized professional development resources. The applicant does not clearly describe specific goals for the project that address methods deepening student learning through tasks that are based on student academic interests. Connections that tie each of the elements of the vision to a comprehensive and coherent plan are limited.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a clear description of the process used to determine that all schools at all levels of education (pre-K-12) will be involved in the project. This process involved an examination of the percentage of students from low-income families (59%), and 27% qualified as high need (homeless, with disabilities requiring an Individualized Learning Plan), are an Limited English Proficient student, or working below grade level). A research-based rationale for including pre-K students is also specified.

(b) A list of the schools that will participate in grant activities is provided and includes seven schools; one pre-school, three K-4 elementary schools, one 5-6 elementary school, one 7-8 middle school, and one high school.

(c) The applicant provides a table that includes the total number of participating students (4,677), participating students from low-income families (2,767), participating students who are high-need students (1,266), and participating educators (338). A second, more detailed table is provided that breaks out these categories by percentages.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan for reform that includes a continuous improvement model called the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP), which focuses on student achievement, workforce engagement and parent satisfaction. The

applicant describes key components of this model, such as the use of Professional Learning Communities and district assessments that have helped bring the district up from 132nd to 48th in the past year, with a goal of being in the top-ten in every aspect of education. However, the applicant does not clearly describe a theory of change or logic model that links reform efforts together in order to translate efforts to meaningful reform beyond the participating schools. In addition, the goal of being in the top ten in every aspect of education is not specific and lacks measures for determining if progress is being made.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a table listing ambitious goals for performance on State summative assessments. Some of these goals do not seem likely to be achievable, given the low baseline data provided. For example, the baseline data on High School Science assessments shows that only 27.7% of students were at Proficient of Distinguished status. However, the goal for this indicator is to have 50% of students reach this status in the next year, and 90% of students reach this status by 2017. It is unclear how the applicant will implement specific strategies that will address this goal in Science, which makes it difficult to predict if this is an attainable target.

(b) The applicant provides a table that describes unduplicated gaps in reading, math and science, along with targets for each content area. A second table is provided that provides a methodology for calculating gap scores and goals for the elementary schools, middle and high school. These targets appear to be ambitious yet achievable.

(c) The applicant provides overall graduation rates for 2010-11 and goals for all students each year of the project. The applicant states that sub-group data is too low to report statistically and is therefore not included. The applicant's reason for not including this data is unclear, since this data is reported in percentages rather than through a statistical calculation. This missing information on baseline data makes it difficult to determine the feasibility of sub-groups achieving target goals.

(d) The applicant provides a table that includes college enrollment rates for 2010-11 and 2011-12, as well as target goals for each year of the project. These targets seem ambitious yet achievable.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides evidence of improving student learning outcomes in a narrative that describes small increases in the average scores on the ACT, Plan and Explore assessments. Assessment results for one low performing elementary school are mentioned for 2010-11, for the spring of 2012, however, four years of data for past performance at the elementary level is missing. The applicant states that achievement data substantially declined for this school during the 2010-2011 school year, but improved in 2012. This evidence indicates recent improvements in student outcomes, but does not support a clear record of success in the past four years. The applicant provides some evidence of success in increasing graduation rates between 2010 and 2011 (8.7% improvement), but does not adequately address success in the past four years in regard to closing the achievement gap, college enrollment.

(b) The applicant provides a compelling example of achieving ambitious and significant reforms in one low-performing elementary school, as well as instances of successful reform in a middle school and a high school. The improvements mentioned in regard to student achievement in these schools were attributed to changes in leadership, increased professional development, and a new math program that integrates hands-on learning with technology-based instruction.

(c) The applicant describes several strategies for making student performance data available to students, educators and parents through presentations, websites, and School Board meetings. The applicant states that data is also shared among teachers through Professional Learning Community meetings.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5	5	1

points)		

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant provides data regarding a District Data Profile, that includes average teacher salaries, average extended pay, and average extra duty pay, however, actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances is not specified.

(b) The applicant provides district salary schedules and mentions that these are available on their web-site, however, actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff are not included.

(c) The applicant provides district salary schedules and mentions that these are available on their web-site, however, actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers are not included.

(d) The applicant provides district salary schedules and mentions that these are available on their web-site, however, actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level are not included.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the State context for implementing this proposal and mentions that the State Board of Education has granted school districts and individual school boards with the authority to make decisions, such as those related to the impact students' personalized learning environments and experiences. However, details regarding other components, such as teacher evaluation, Common Core Standards implementation or data systems are limited in regard to State legal and statutory requirements.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a detailed description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and, includes references to Student Advisory Council meetings, school-wide faculty meetings, School Based Decision Making Councils, presentations at district's Board of Education, community member and business leader support, and support from a local university. The applicant describes interviews and conversations with stakeholders and students in regard to feedback on technology needs. The applicant provides evidence in the form of signatures from teachers in support of the project, and states that 70% support the proposal, however, this is difficult to determine, given the actual number of faculty and signatures is not mentioned.

(b) Ten letters of support from key stakeholders are included in the appendix. These letters are written by students, the Board Chair, community members, the Rotary Club president, a parent, the PTO president, and the dean of a local university partner. Support from local government officials such as the Mayor are not included.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes planning activities that transpired during the past two years in preparation for deconstructing the Common Core Standards. The district participated in Content Leadership Networks and had teachers create tools with curriculum specialists that include daily learning targets. The applicant provides a plan for analyzing gaps in student achievement based on data from formative assessments. The logic behind implementing personalized learning environments is addressed in regard to providing a developmentally appropriate, systematic approach aligned with Common Core Standards. However, the applicant does not adequately provide details regarding needs and gaps in relation to the implementation of personalized learning environments. Evidence of how the applicant determined needs and gaps in current educational programming that will be improved by the implementation of personalized learning environments are limited.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes implementing a blended learning approach to learning that involves a program modeled after the School of One, and a Rotation model where students rotate through online- and offline-learning stations in a given subject with in a fixed schedule, based on individual needs. This plan involves five stages for achieving goals and includes a District Foundation Stage, Development Stage (preschool), Discovery Stage (Grades K-4), Exploratory Stage (Grades 5-8), and Expeditionary Stage (Grades 9-12).

(a) The applicant describes strategies to support student learning through the implementation of Performance Advocates, peers, and Personalized Learning Plans created by stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, and Performance Advocates). The applicant describes strategies for allowing students to engage in deep learning experiences through enrichment activities, support other students in need, receive support in areas where they demonstrate deficits and accelerate learning by beginning mastery of additional targets. The applicant plans to have teachers, district leaders, and a software engineer develop a computerized algorithm adjusts each student's daily learning sequence, however, it is unclear how this complex process will be accomplished. It is also unclear how much time it will take to develop and test such a tool for effectiveness, to ensure that it will accomplish project goals. It is also unclear how students will obtain access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

(b) The applicant plans to install internet hubs throughout the county, in order to promote accessibility to digital learning to students and parents, and provide access to the State's Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System's resources to promote Common Core Standards. Tracking and management of student learning is described in regard to the previously mentioned algorithm, through Professional Learning Community monitoring, and daily logs aligned to Personal Learning Plans. Feedback is addressed in regard to meetings with teachers and Performance Advocates, and the algorithm, which will provide recommendations for improvement. Strategies for attaining college and career standards and graduation requirements, and accelerating students are mentioned, as well as methods for accommodating students in an alterative program if they are at risk for failing in a traditional setting. However, details regarding how personalized learning environments will be utilized with these students are not limited.

(c) The applicant mentions the use of Performance Advocates who be hired to support students design, implement, manage, and assess Personalized Learning plans and ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant describes strategies for supporting all participating educators through training, professional learning communities, and leadership teams. Examples include having a team of educators participate in a site visit to the School of One in New York to experience personalized learning in action, and hiring a consultant to help implement project activities. The applicant describes professional development activities at the school level that will address personalization of the learning environment through the Rotation model and the Flex model (at the high school), development of personalized learning plans, Standards-based grading, and the implementation of the Teacher Professional Growth and Effectiveness System. The applicant describes a continuous improvement model called the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. However, it is unclear how the applicant plans to improve the use of feedback through professional development.

(b) The applicant describes strategies for helping educators identify optimal learning approaches, such as through algorithms that are part of the systemic personalized learning initiative. Other examples include using formative assessment data, Performance Advocates, and Personalized Learning Plans that target students needs and interests. A number of high quality learning resources are described, including digital text books, software programs and digital applications. However, it is unclear how the applicant plans to collect feedback about the effectiveness of these resources in meeting student needs.

(c) The applicant describes a plan for providing professional development in personalized learning to teachers, school leaders and school leadership teams, through meetings and walkthroughs called Instructional Service Stops. Feedback on these walkthroughs will be provided through reflective dialogs after each walk-through. Leadership teams will also participate in professional learning activities called Together Everyone Achieves More, Keeping Instruction Dedicated to Students (TEAM KIDS), that focus on conversations where common expectations are discussed. The district also plans to hire a consultant to support teacher training in the implementation of personalized learning.

(d) The applicant mentions that is has a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals and includes a description of a partnership with a college and a
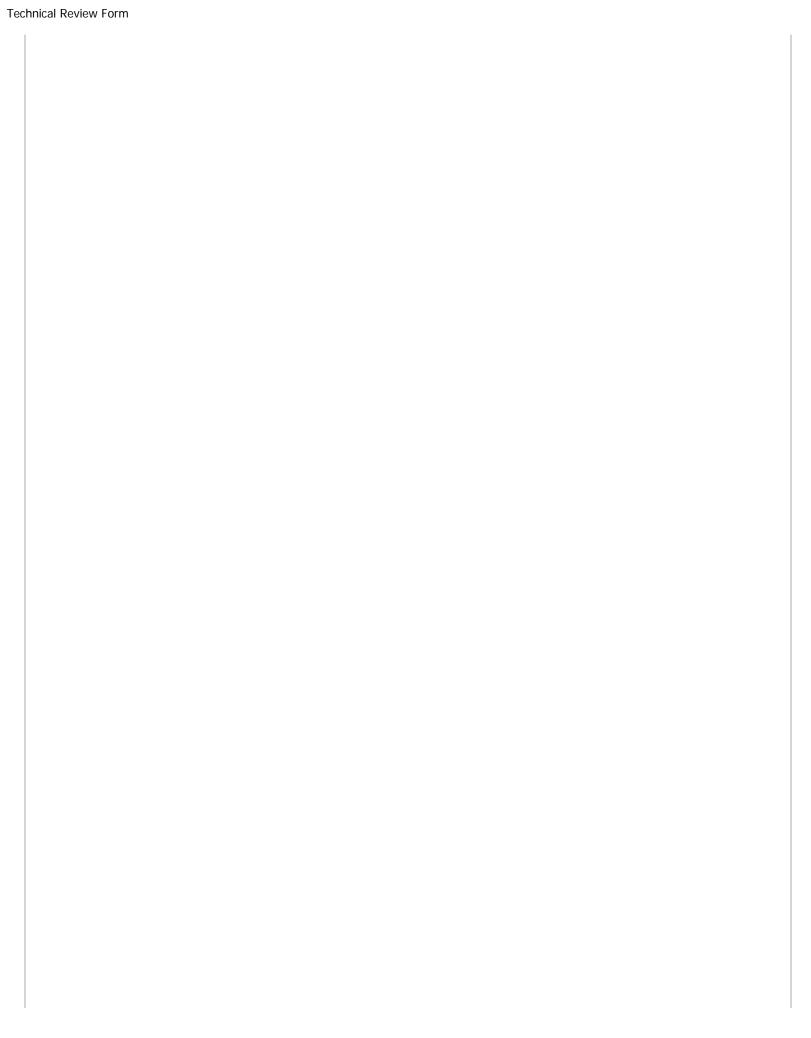
local university's teacher training program. Strategies for supporting effective teachers include involving college students in the classroom as mentors, utilizing instructional coaches, co-teaching, and technology resources. Details regarding how these strategies will increase the number of effective teachers and principals are limited.
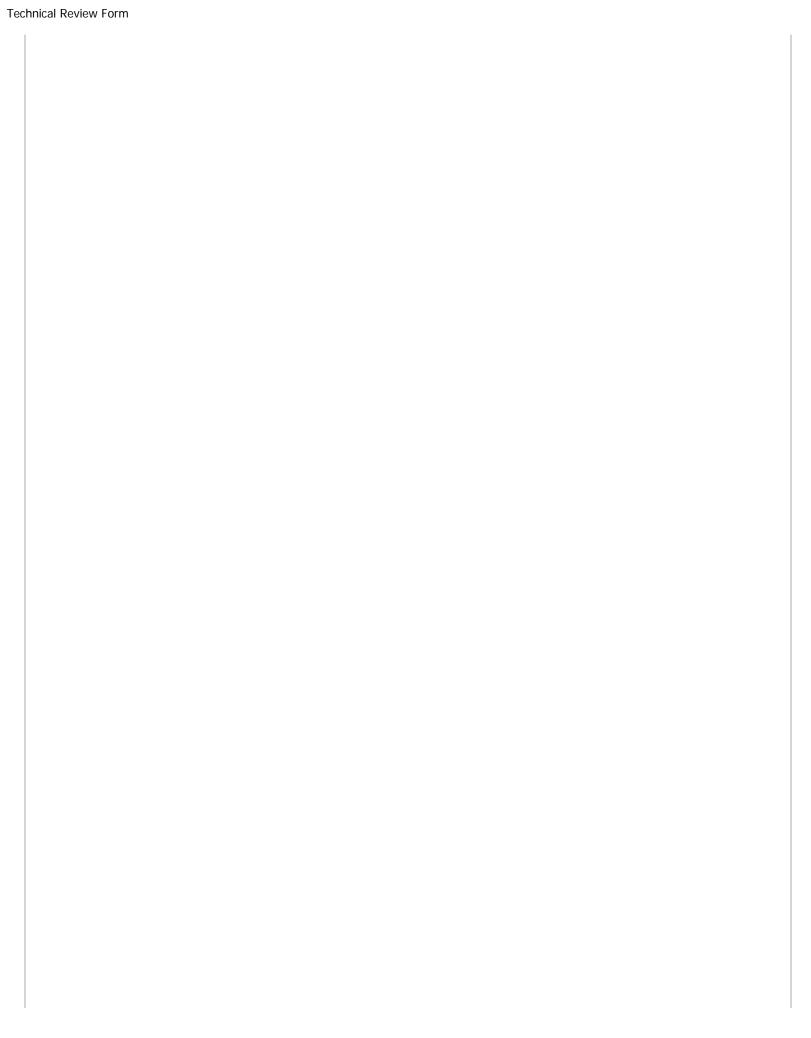
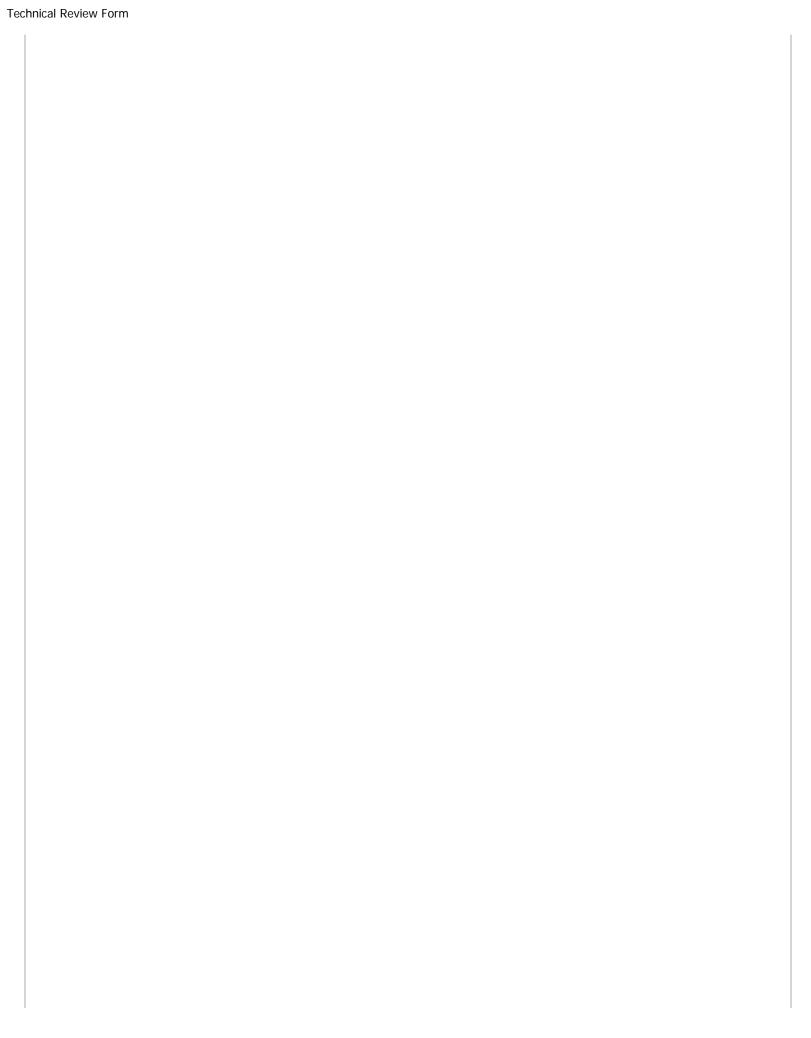## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

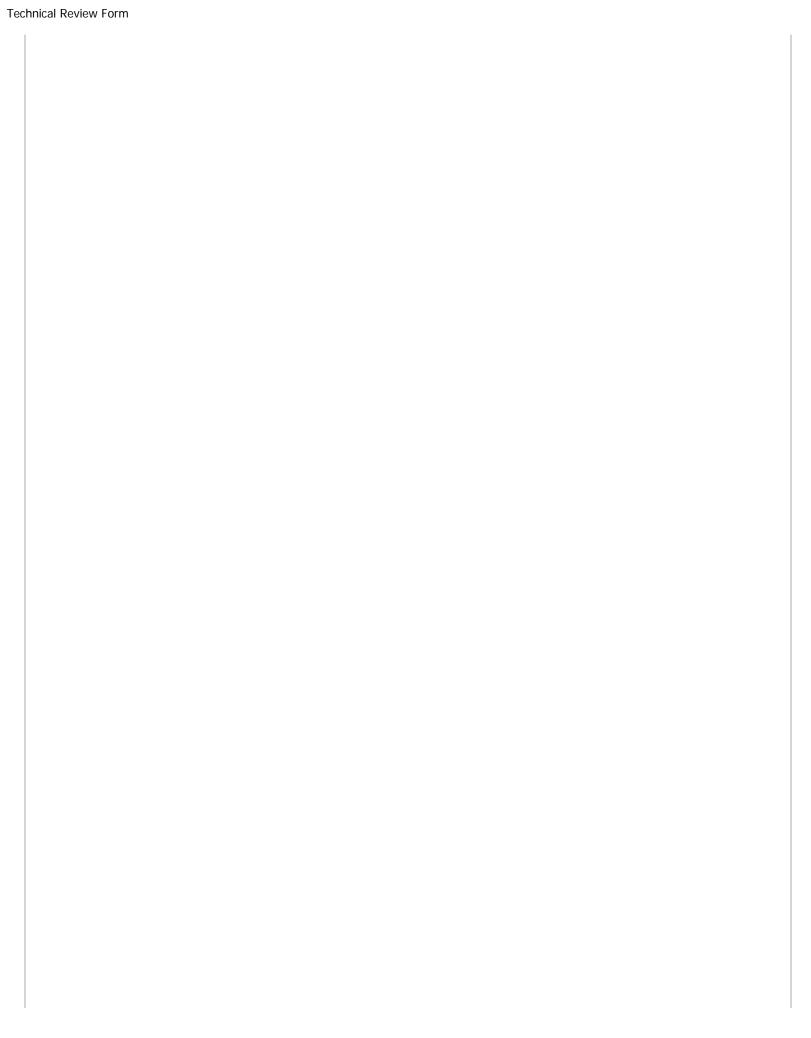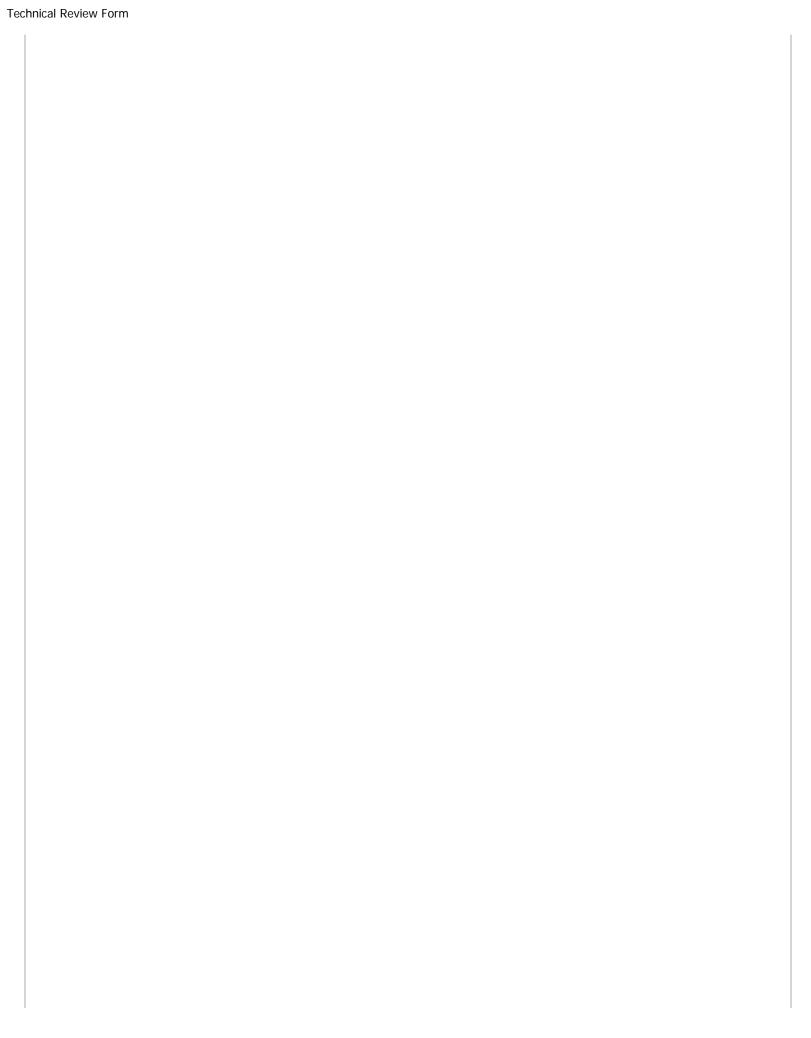|	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant mentions practices, policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning. For example, the applicant describes a framework for a continuous improvement model called the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, that focuses on student achievement, workforce engagement, and parent satisfaction. The applicant provides details regarding how the district has cut the number of administrators and increased the number of educators, in order to meet the needs of students. In addition, there are plans to hire specific staff to advance personalized learning such as Performance Advocates, technology coaches, and trained curriculum specialist who will model lessons. Professional Learning Communities will be attended by administrators in order to provide a team approach to personalization. The applicant also describes a partnership with a two regional universities to improve the preparation of future employees.

(b) The applicant clearly describes how school leadership teams will be provided sufficient flexibility and autonomy over school decisions through school based decision making councils that empowers teachers and parents. The applicant states that decisions are made using data, however, it is unclear how much control much control the school leadership team has over school-level budgets.

(c) The applicant provides a detailed description regarding a Individual Learning Program that includes taking interest inventories, career aptitude tests, and developing a course of study based on required courses. The applicant mentions that students will utilize different modalities and timeframes such as evening classes based on individual needs, and includes a plan for earning college credit through a partnership with a local university. The applicant mentions multiple modalities for demonstrating mastery through competency assessments that provide students with the ability to advance through courses in a personalized timeframe.

(d) The applicant describes several strategies for providing multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards, such as through competency assessments, job shadowing, and job training while earning their diplomas.

(e) The applicant describes strategies for adapting instruction for students with disabilities and English learners, such as videotaped lecture notes, Text-to-Speech synthesizers, screen readers, supplemental instructional resources, and live, web-based learning.

Technical Review Form

Technical Review Form

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides strategies for ensuring that all participating students have access to the technology tools described in this project. For example, the district plans to create internet hotspots in churches and community centers in order to increase accessibility to resources.

(b) The applicant provides a plan to hire a technology coach and develop methods for loaning laptop and iPods as needed to ensure that students, parents, educators and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support.

(c) The applicant describes strategies for using an e-platform learning environment that allow parents and students round the clock access to instructional resources. It is unclear if this platform will include an open format that will allow parents and students to export their information and securely store personal records.

(d) The applicant describes strategies for using a student information management system called Infinite campus to support student achievement data. It is unclear how the applicant plans on ensuring that the schools in this project will use interoperability data systems that include human resources data and budget data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a description of a solid strategy for continuous improvement based on the Baldrige Performance Excellence model, utilizing a Performance Improvement Council to ensure implementation of grant activities. This council will meet twice each month. In addition, school based Decision Making Council members will analyze data related to grant activities on a monthly basis, while every school will analyze formal and informal data on a weekly basis through Professional Learning Communities. Information such regarding progress will be reported at Board meetings, released to local media, and posted on the district website. The applicant plans to utilize a implementation and impact tool to monitor implementation and impact on student achievement, however, measures for evaluating impact are not clearly described. It is unclear if the members of the Decision Making Council will have the expertise to effectively evaluate program activities, given the limited details provided.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides details regarding strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders through the district website, electronic newsletters, Facebook, a telephone notification system, radio broadcasts, weekly newspaper articles, parent and community surveys, weekly classroom walk throughs and feedback. State-wide and national communication with other school districts and education leaders are also planned through presentations at conferences, school district consortiums, and state-level publications and news services.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides details regarding performance measures at each grade level. Examples include the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning for pre-schoolers, State Mandated Assessments, Stanford 10 Assessments, Iowa Form E Survey, Act Explore, Plan, and ACT Quality Core. A table that provides performance targets for all students and subgroups is also provided for each measure. A clear rationale for the selection of each measure is not included.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of project activities through data collected by leadership teams. However, it is unclear if these teams will have the expertise and objectivity to evaluate the program adequately. For example, the applicant describes strategies for using technology to provide streamlined professional development activities, through a system that will be linked with the State's longitudinal data system. The applicant does not describe details regarding how these activities will be measured in regard to impact on instruction and student achievement.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project in addition to project funds, and includes a table that lists each funding source amount to be used for each year of the project. Examples include Title I funding, Title II funding, State technology funding, and funding for Rural and low income leadership development. A detailed budget is provided that describes reasonable and sufficient support for project implemenation.One-time investments are listed for year one and include the installation of wireless internet access across the district, iPADS, laptops, and other electronic tools. The applicant describes a plan to use a portion of Title funds to sustain initiatives, following the life of the grant.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan to sustain project goals after the term of the grant, and provides examples of creative strategies for this. One example is the plan to offer seniors the option to purchase computers when they graduate, then replacing these with updated versions. Professional development will be sustained through a train the trainer model. The district has vowed not to reduce budgets that support project activities like personalized student learning, in future years, in order to continue these initiatives after Federal funding ends.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan to partner with community services such as Community Education, the Migrant Program, Extended School Services, and Great Leaps (parent volunteers), to provide adult education to English language learners, tutoring materials for migrant students, and reading support for students reading below grade level. There is a plan to collaborate with the State department of protection to identify, track and serve families who are most at risk in the community. There is also a plan to provide services to students through a collaboration with a local mental health agency, and to work with a resource officer who can provide instruction about drug and alcohol awareness. Strategies are mentioned regarding engaging community members and stakeholder through the creation of a coalition to support school success from birth to five years of age.Population-level desired results are listed, and include other education outcomes such an increase in the number of students who transition successfully to Kindergarten, however, only two measures are provided. Details regarding plans for scaling up and evaluating the project are limited.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a detailed plan to support student learning through the implementation of a personalized learning environment modeled after the School of One in New York. This plan includes having teachers, district leaders, and a software engineer develop a computerized algorithm that adjusts to each student's daily learning sequence. The plan includes methods for analyzing student achievement data regarding progress toward meeting Common Core Standards, in order to identify gaps and improve instruction. Strategies for implementation include professional development in the use of data and Personalized Learning Plans. Activities that address accelerating student achievement and deepening student learning are articulated and include the implementation of digital tools, online course work, evening classes, and technologies that improve instruction for English learners and students with disabilities. The applicant provides several high quality strategies for increasing student access to effective teachers through a partnership with two universities, as well as through co-teaching and the use of mentors.

Total	210	165